COVID-19 data challenges

- As countries need data more urgently than ever before…
  - To track the pandemic
  - To plan and monitor emergency response efforts
  - To inform medium- and long-term mitigation and recovery strategies
- …statistical operations are seriously disrupted:
  - Office closures
  - Poor connectivity in some countries
  - Disruption of face-to-face data collection
- There is a need for new initiatives and repurposing of existing efforts

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The UN Statistics Division's vision for innovation

Harness the data revolution to ensure that necessary data are available to policy and decision makers, and the public at large

- Promote **innovation** by National Statistical Systems
- Put **NSOs at the center** – in their role as data stewards, coordinating and validating data from different sources
- Facilitate **partnerships** with other data providers
- Ensure adherence to the **Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**
- Ensure **data quality**
- Adopt **open data** principles
- Promote data **interoperability** tools and principles
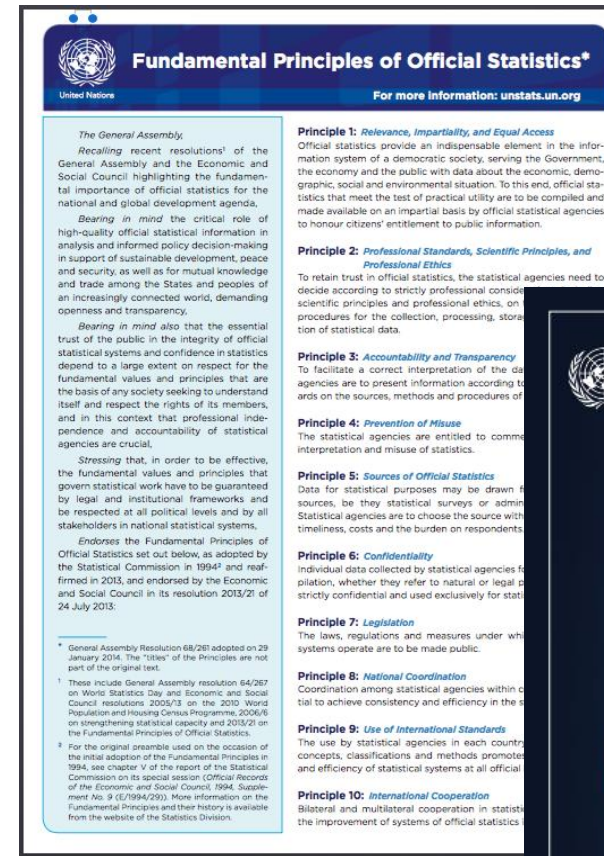
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High-quality, interoperable open data

Investing in open data and data interoperability solutions and in validating data (quality and adherence to FPOS) helps **extract value from data** that already exists

- **High-quality, trusted and reliable data,** available to a wide range of users
- **Open data** policies and principles
- **Interoperable data** from technical and legal/institutional perspective

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COVID-19 has accelerated change

- **The pandemic has**
  - Exacerbated data inequalities
  - Made changes and innovation more urgent than ever before

- **NSOs have stepped up**
  - Leveraged modern technologies and innovative data sources
  - Played a strong coordination role
  - Shown that new tools can supplement or replace traditional data collection approaches

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Our response to the COVID-19 data challenges

- Understand **disruptions to statistical operations** and immediate needs

  - UNSD/World Bank COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices

- **Sharing knowledge**: UNSD COVID-19 Response website

- **Making data open and interoperable**: UNSD COVID-19 Data Hub

- Peer-to-peer learning: New Collaborative on **Use of Administrative Data** Sources for Statistical Purposes

- Refocusing global events: 3rd **UN World Data Forum** and webinars series

- UNSD/FCDO project on SDG monitoring – New emphasis **on immediate needs** and activities; maximizing tools for remote support to 20 countries
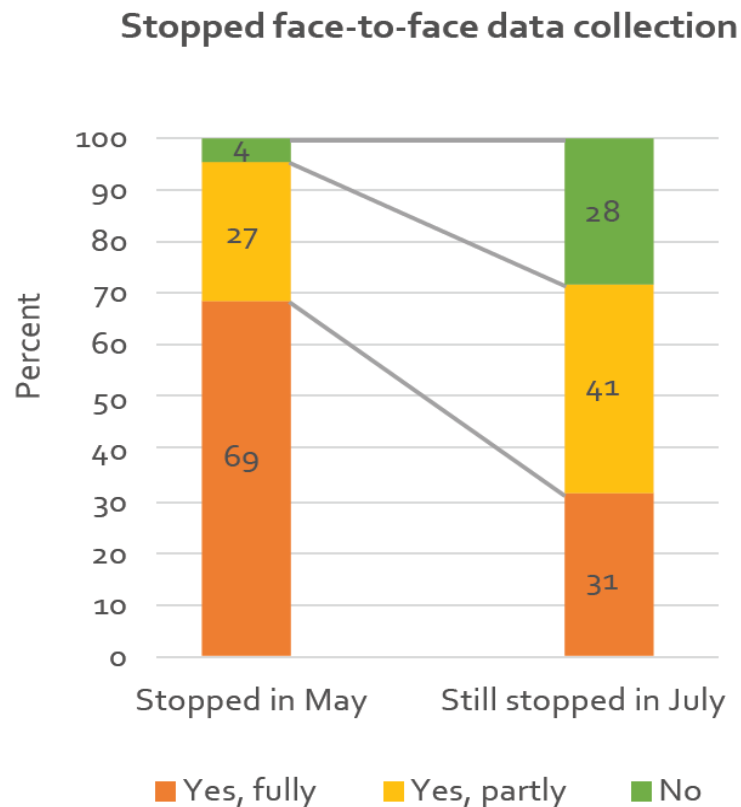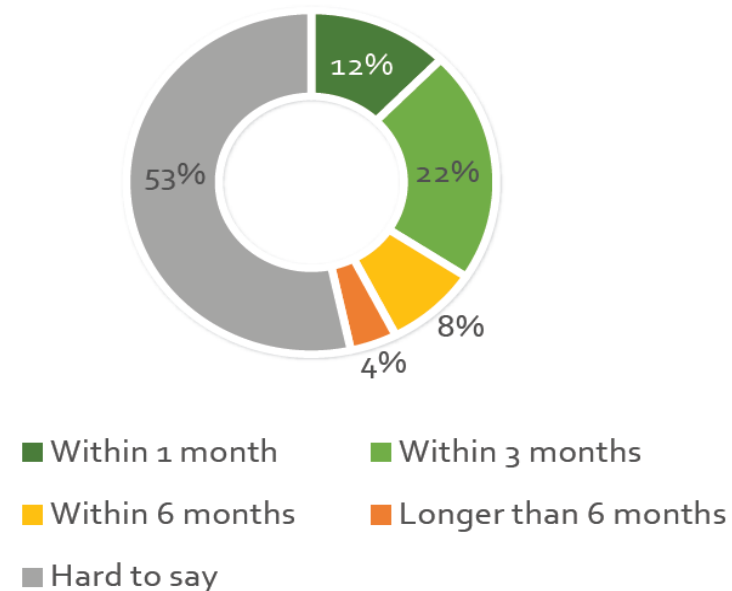
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Global COVID-19 survey of NSOs: the pandemic has greatly impacted statistical operations

Short-term statistical production, which heavily relies on traditional face-to-face methods, continues to be affected

Stopped face-to-face data collection

	Stopped in May	Still stopped in July
No	4	28
Yes, partly	27	41
Yes, fully	69	31

■ Yes, fully   ■ Yes, partly   ■ No

When do you expect to be able to resume face-to-face interviews in full?

- 12% Within 1 month
- 22% Within 3 months
- 8% Within 6 months
- 4% Longer than 6 months
- 53% Hard to say

■ Within 1 month   ■ Within 3 months
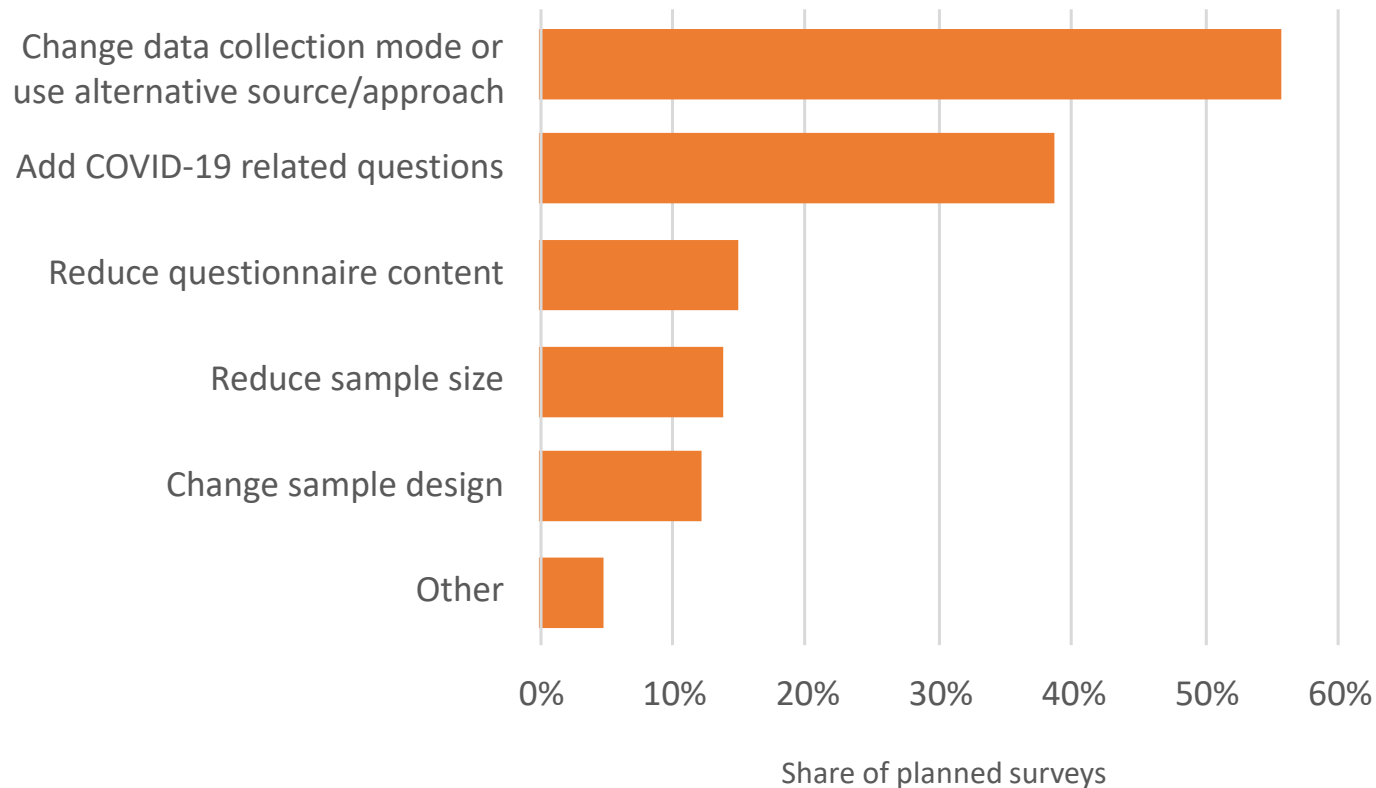■ Within 6 months   ■ Longer than 6 months
■ Hard to say

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Some countries adapted quickly to challenges raised by COVID-19

If you had to alter a planned survey because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which changes did / will you introduce?
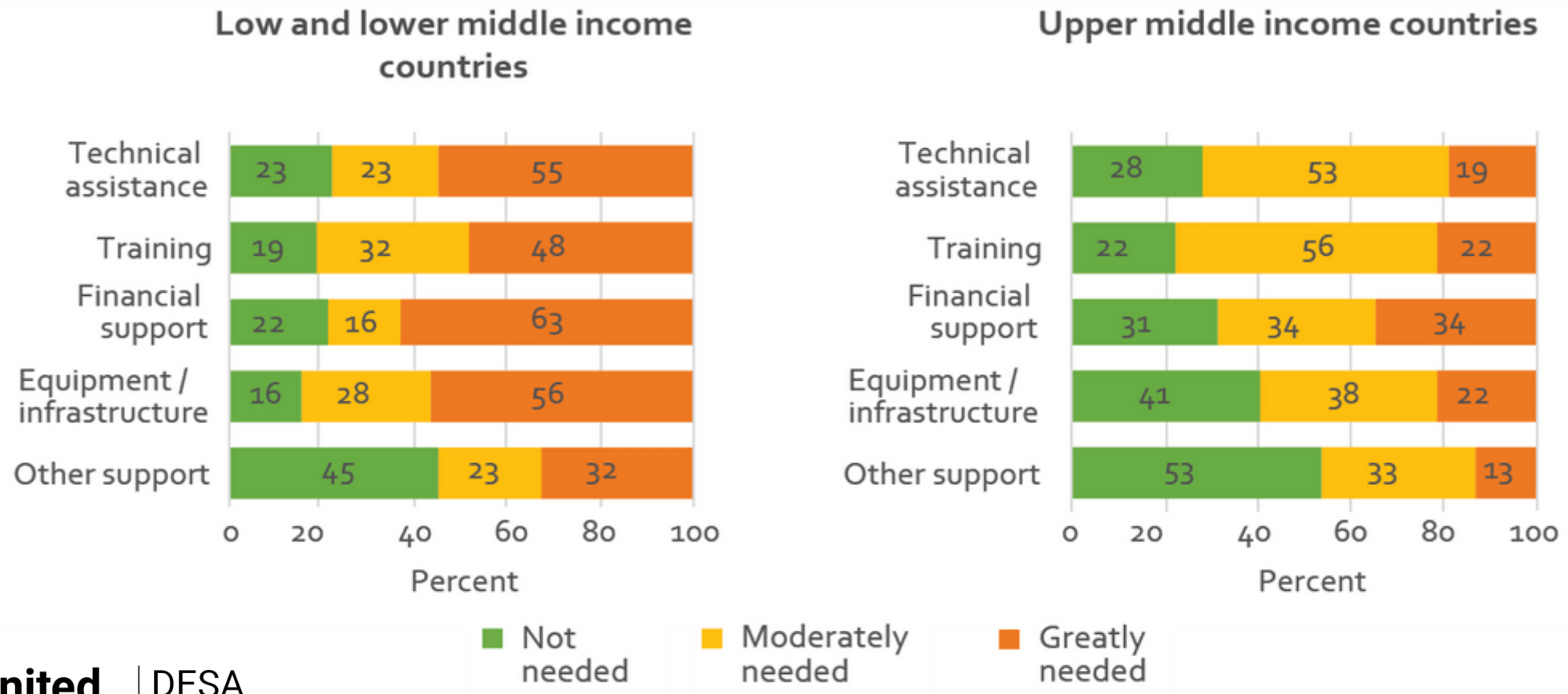

Share of planned surveys

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….but low and lower middle income countries need additional funding to face the new challenges

Need for additional support to face the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic:

Low and lower middle income countries

	Not needed	Moderately needed	Greatly needed
Technical assistance	23	23	55
Training	19	32	48
Financial support	22	16	63
Equipment / infrastructure	16	28	56
Other support	45	23	32

Percent

Upper middle income countries

	Not needed	Moderately needed	Greatly needed
Technical assistance	28	53	19
Training	22	56	22
Financial support	31	34	34
Equipment / infrastructure	41	38	22
Other support	53	33	13

Percent

Legend:
- Not needed
- Moderately needed
- Greatly needed

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Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS): COVID-19 and household surveys

- **Coordination of COVID-19 impact surveys in countries**

  https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/covid-19-and-household-surveys/COVID-19-impact-surveys/

- **Guidance to countries on maintaining continuity of regular survey programmes and methodological aspects of surveys related to COVID-19**

  https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/task-forces/covid-19-and-household-surveys/methodology-on-COVID-19-impact-surveys/

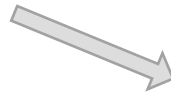- **Collective vision on implications of COVID-19 for reshaping the national household survey programmes**

New tools that we can offer to countries

Technical Guidance Note on Planning and Carrying out a Household Survey Under COVID-19

Other forthcoming ISWGHS tools:

- Guidelines on Spatial Anonymization
- Disseminating survey microdata
- Guidance to countries on a comprehensive survey programme
- Small area estimates
- Sampling the vulnerable populations

Annex 1. Checklist for planning and carrying out household surveys under COVID-19

The checklist is created to facilitate the planning and organization of household surveys. More detailed explanation of each item is available in the text in its corresponding section.

1. **General principles**
   - *Minimizing the risk of COVID-19 transmission among household survey field staff and survey respondents*
   - *Limiting the field data collection activity to the minimum that is necessary*
   - *Ensuring high quality and timely data are available for policymaking at the national and local level.*

#	Phase	Sub-phase	Task	Status
1	*2. Planning data collection*	*2.1. Setting survey objectives*	Consider including COVID-19 related questions in the survey	☐
2		*2.2. Assessing COVID-19 situation*	Assess whether face-to-face interview is plausible at the national, regional and local level	☐
3			Assess the need for personal protective equipment and procedures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission	☐
4			Set protocols on income protection and paid sick leave for suspected cases of COVID-19 among field staff	☐
5		*2.3. Budgeting*	Budget for COVID-19-related additional costs: personnel, transport, equipment and consumables	☐
6			Budget for additional cost in case when field operation has to stop	☐
7		*2.4. Choosing data collection mode*	If a new mode is going to be used, assess sample coverage, response rate, data quality, call centers (for telephone interview), data infrastructure and data comparability over time.	☐
8		*2.5. Designing questionnaire*	Design the questionnaire that fits for the data collection mode	☐
9			Reassess inclusion of questions that require extensive physical interactions	☐
10	*3. Field organization*	*3.1. Recruiting field staff*	Check national/local regulations on size of small group gathering and plan accordingly when hiring field staff	☐
11			Make provision for certain percentage of possible COVID-19 related	☐

Task Force on COVID-19 and household surveys

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented itself as both a tremendous challenge and an opportunity to household survey programmes in countries.

The overall objectives of the Task Force are to (a) support the coordination of the COVID-19 impact surveys in countries; (b) provide guidance to countries both on maintaining the continuity of regular survey programmes and various methodological aspects of COVID-19 related surveys; and (c) establish a collective vision on the implications of COVID-19 for reshaping the national household survey programmes.

🌐 National responses to COVID-19

Based on a survey carried out by UN Statistics Division and the World Bank, many national statistical offices have responded through innovative approaches.

🗄 COVID-19 impact surveys

Members of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys are supporting countries to measure the impact of COVID-19 through sample surveys. As of 8 July 2020, we have supported about 180 countries through 480 surveys.

📕 Methodology on COVID-19 impact surveys

ISWGHS members have issued various guidelines to help countries in carrying out surveys to assess the impact of COVID-19.

Post-COVID: moving to the "new normal"?

- **Systematic assessment of national data needs**
  - What should be collected through household surveys?

- **Strengthening survey infrastructure for CAWI and CATI surveys**
  - Sampling frame and accompanying mode-appropriate survey tools and protocols
- **Integrating survey data with other data sources**
  - Making survey data more interoperable

  - Strengthening technical skills (e.g., record linkage, machine learning, multi-frame sampling)
  - Data access and data privacy
- **Building empirical evidence in developing countries**
  - Validity and reliability of telephone and web interview compared to face-to-face
  - Data integration (multi-frame sampling, record-linkage, modelling)

Collaborative on use of administrative data sources

- **Objective:** Address both urgent and longer-term needs to access and use administrative data for statistical purposes

- **Multi-stakeholder** collaborative of countries and regional and international agencies convened by UNSD and GPSDD

- Platform for **collaboration** and **sharing** of knowledge and experiences

- Focus on **simple, ready-to-implement solutions** that address **priority gaps in countries**
  - Creation of inventory of resources and earning from each other– sharing practical examples
  - Develop additional tools and guidance, with specific COVID-19 angle

- Currently only including **NSOs** from countries, may consider expanding to certain administrative data owners
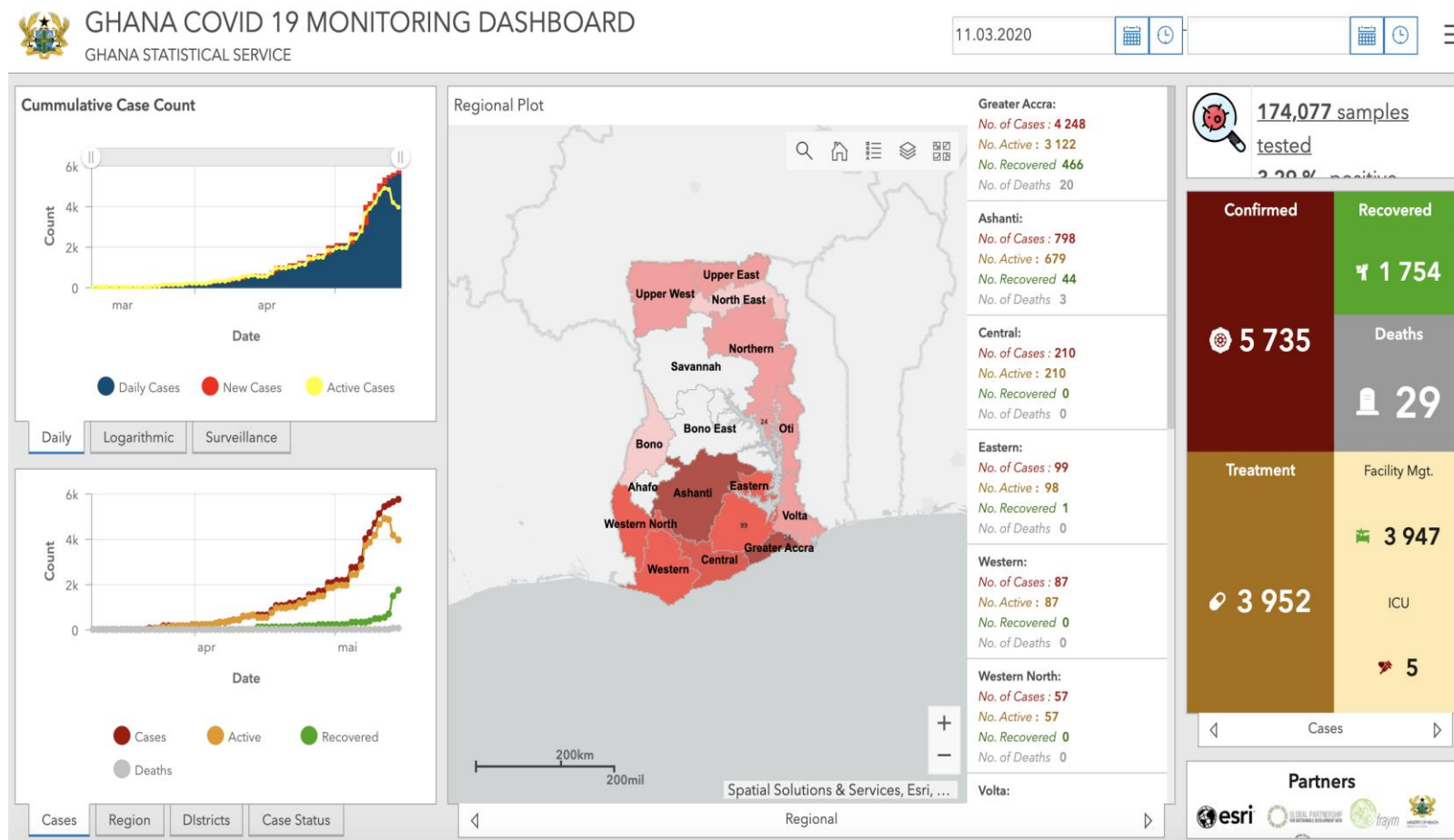
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Example: COVID-19 hubs – a place to share

Data from Ministry of Health visualized by Ghana Statistical Service (GSS)

- Good example of **collaboration** and **openness** across government agencies in time of COVID-19

- GSS is assessing other sources too, but will have to do more **quality assessments** before data can be published

- Much work needed before data can be made available on dashboards

Establishment of 3 Task Teams

Smaller teams established from the bigger collaborative based on results from the survey:

- Task team 1: Institutional framework, coordination and partnerships
- Task team 2: Data management and standardization
- Task team 3: Technical interoperability and linking

Expected goals/outcomes:

- Identify specific challenges within the focus area.

- Together explore useful solutions drawing on existing guidance, tools, case studies and experience.

- Agree on different approaches to deliver support to the wider collaborative and a broader audience
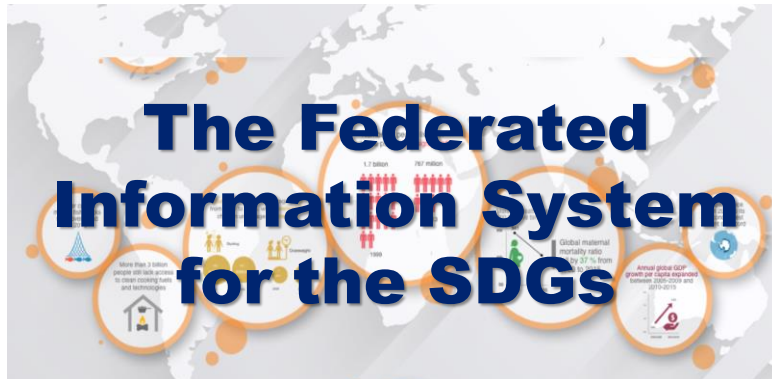
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Encouraging data innovation and data integration

Support countries in the use of innovative sources, technologies and methods for the streamlined production and dissemination of better, more timely and disaggregated data for sustainable development

Provide the space for national and international reporting and the integration and analysis of SDG data and statistics across a system of federated data hubs

Communicating data

- National Reporting and Dissemination Platforms

  - Ensure data is used to the fullest extent possible in improving people's lives

  - Help monitor progress so we can take action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

  - Leverage story-telling and modern data visualizations to communicate trends and patterns

  - Support effective policy and decision making though actionable **insights** derived from high-quality data

Building and maintaining national reporting and dissemination platforms requires ongoing, country-led capacity development efforts

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Thank you